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Wilton D. Gregory

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**MARY, SEAT OF WISDOM:
THE GIFT OF WISDOM
A Homily**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is not without reason that some titles fit some people and not others. Young people can be bright, clever, smart, even precocious, but only a mature person deserves the title: WISE. Wisdom is not an attribute that seems to be compatible with youth. Wisdom comes with age. Wisdom is a property that accompanies a person who has experienced at least something of life's challenges and difficulties. Wisdom is the state of a person who sees the "big picture," of a person who has gained some perspective on life.

Wisdom is the gift that came to Mary after she "had kept all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:51b). The young maiden who quickly and without hesitation declared herself to be the Lord's handmaid became the Mother of Wisdom, the very image of Wisdom. Like most mothers, Mary developed in her understanding of what it means to be a mother. Visited by angels and astrologers, advised by prophets and prophetesses, a midnight emigrant, she could not help but come to understand more deeply all that God had asked of her in becoming the Mother of the Christ.

Seat of Wisdom is a title of the mature Woman of Faith who never took back her initial enthusiastic "yes" to God's Will, but who nonetheless came to understand the price of what God had asked of her. Is hers not the Journey of Faith that we are all asked to follow? Our development as priests or religious, as married or single people, asks each of us to grow in our commitments. I dare say, I understand better today what I accepted in presenting myself to the Church as a candidate for the priesthood, and I suspect that tomorrow will bring additional

insight. And I certainly realize now, as I could not have understood eight years ago, what the honor and burden of the episcopal service in the Church means. Wisdom comes with experience. She who is the Mother of the Church is also a person who developed in her own Faith. Mary is not the static, cardboard, docile individual who was perfectly formed in obedience in her youth and never deepened in her love for God and in her acceptance of God's will. She grew, as we all must grow, in the love of God. Her title as Seat of Wisdom is, thus, one which fits her as a mature Woman of Faith, one who tasted of the mystery of being Mother of the Word-Made-Flesh.

Wisdom enriches our lives. Wisdom allows us gradually to come to understand issues that are long since past and prepares us to be open to moments still to come. The wise person becomes the individual who sees things with a calm perspective. Wisdom also brings with it the gift of humility, since the truly wise person is always capable of admitting to himself or herself that God's plan may always be more than human ability to understand fully. Wisdom brings peace, because the wise person is the resigned individual who has learned to trust not so much in personal gifts as in the fidelity of God. Mary is, thus, Seat of Wisdom for the Church. She is that model whose enthusiasm never falters, but whose patience and trust only increase. She is the *Seat of God's Wisdom*, and she never forgets that God's Wisdom is more than she can fully appropriate.

When the Church honors Mary as the Seat of God's Wisdom, we must also pray for the gift of Wisdom—not to make us more than we are, but to help us become all that we are intended to be in God's Plan. We pray that the gift of Wisdom be found within the entire Church, so that we, as the People of God and the Sons and Daughters of Mary, might not only say yes to all that God might ask of us, but that we would also continue to grow in our ability to allow God's Wisdom to guide our very lives.

† WILTON D. GREGORY, S.L.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago
Homily, 29 May 1991